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BIBLICAL SCHOLARS OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1882

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There lies before me as I write a thin quarto with the title of *The Hebrew Student*, the first page of which bears date of April, 1882, and announces itself as Vol. I, No. 1, of "a monthly journal in the interests of Old Testament literature and interpretation." The first article is a translation of Franz Delitzsch's course of lectures on the Pentateuch, as delivered in the University of Leipzig the previous summer, and made from manuscript notes by Samuel Ives Curtiss. The names of Curtiss and of other biblical scholars which appear in successive numbers of this journal awaken a host of cherished memories. The writer of this somewhat reminiscent paper may witness the good confession that he was trained in his earlier biblical studies after the straitest school and teachings of Franz Delitzsch, C. F. Keil, E. W. Hengstenberg, Moses Stuart, and Edward Robinson. Tayler Lewis, worthy to be classed with any of these, had but recently passed from his earthly labors when the name of William R. Harper began to command attention as a Hebrew student and a teacher of remarkable ability. This first number of a journal devoted to the study of Hebrew and Old Testament literature marked a noteworthy transition period in Semitic scholarship and in biblical criticism and interpretation. Since 1882 the critical study of the Holy Scriptures has made a very remarkable progress, and not a few names of Old and New Testament scholars, then quite unknown, have come into prominence.

The Revised Version of the New Testament appeared in 1881, and that of the Old followed in 1885. Several names that appear among the American revisers were not, perhaps, men of the highest reputation as specialists in biblical learning, but the Old and New Testament companies, taken as a whole, fairly represented the best biblical scholarship of that time. Of the American scholars who took part in the epochal work Philip Schaff was president,

and William H. Green and Theodore D. Woolsey the chairmen respectively of the Old and New Testament companies. Schaff combined the best elements of both German and American scholarship. He was a born leader of men, a disciple of Tholuck and of Neander, a master in biblical as well as in historical theology, also encyclopedic in knowledge, and sympathetic and active in all good works, especially in enterprises of great pith and moment. William Henry Green of Princeton was probably, in 1882, the most distinguished representative of Old Testament scholarship in the United States. His *Hebrew Grammar*, begun at the suggestion of his honored colleague Joseph Addison Alexander, reached a third edition in 1883, and served an excellent purpose among the students and teachers of Hebrew in this country. His *Vindication of the Pentateuch from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso*, in 1863, made him famous as a staunch conservative in biblical criticism, and for a generation thereafter he was acknowledged as the most powerful defender of the current traditional views of the Old Testament writings. In his contentions with the positions of the modern higher criticism perhaps the most noteworthy were his articles in *Hebraica*, Vols. V-VIII (1888-92), on "The Pentateuchal Question." Were these articles put in a volume by themselves they would make a work much larger than the same author's *Moses and the Prophets*, which had appeared some years before. Theodore Dwight Woolsey, twenty-five years president of Yale, was renowned for his mastery of the Greek language and literature as well as for his numerous contributions to political science and international law. He had few if any superiors among the American scholars of his generation.

In goodly fellowship with these eminent divines I am wont to associate Thomas Jefferson Conant, whose life extended well-nigh over the entire nineteenth century. His translation of Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, his annotated version of Job and Proverbs for the American Bible Union, and his new version of the Psalms, with philological notes, in the Schaff-Lange *Commentary*, gave him a high rank among the most accomplished Hebrew scholars of his time. Contemporary with him, closely associated in literary work and living to a like old age, was A. C. Kendrick, translator of Ols-

hausen's *Commentary on the New Testament*, Moll's *Commentary on Hebrews* in the Lange series, and the Gospel of John in the American edition of Meyer's *Exegetical Handbook of the New Testament*. He was also the author of many other works. One may naturally think of Horatio B. Hackett as closely affiliated with the two last named. His *Commentary on the Original Text of the Acts of the Apostles* is a magnificent piece of New Testament exegesis. His service also in the American Bible Union and in editing with Ezra Abbot the enlarged American edition of Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* evinced his superior rank as a biblical scholar. James Strong was another of those sturdy and tireless workmen in the field of biblical literature, whose range of learning was immense, and whose productiveness as a writer was correspondent with his great acquirements. With his friend and colleague John McClintock he planned the *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, and after McClintock's death in 1870 he carried forward the vast enterprise on his own personal responsibility, preparing a very large proportion of the biblical articles with his own hand, and directing the whole work to successful completion in ten large octavos, with two supplementary volumes.

No man on the American Committee of Revisers commanded higher esteem than the Unitarian layman Ezra Abbot. As a textual critic he was *facile princeps* among them all, and his judgment on all questions of exact exegesis was ever treated with exceptional regard. His connection with the Prolegomena to the eighth edition of Tischendorf's large critical Greek Testament, and his numerous contributions to biblical and critical studies gave him a marked pre-eminence among the New Testament scholars of the United States. Along with Abbot I should speak of Caspar René Gregory into whose hands it fell to write the Latin Prolegomena for Tischendorf's large work just mentioned. An American by birth and early training, we may claim him as one of our own, although his life work has been chiefly done in Germany, where he holds an honored professorship in the University of Leipzig and stands pre-eminent as a textual critic of the New Testament. His volume on the *Canon and Text of the New Testament* is a splendid monument of his industry and learning. With the name of

Ezra Abbot I also naturally associate that of my early and revered teacher, Timothy Dwight of New Haven. As critics and exegetes both Dwight and Abbot appeared perhaps at their best in the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in 1881 in their exhaustive discussion of the grammatical construction of Rom. 9:5. Their learned papers may be read in the *Journal* of that society and supply about all that is to be said for either rendering of that long-disputed text. Dwight's painstaking ability and skill



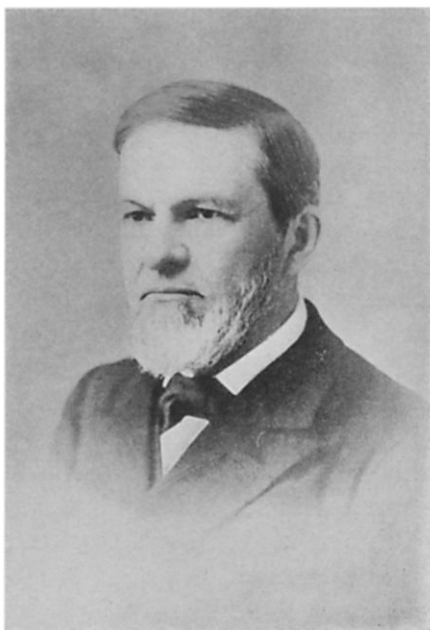
JOSEPH HENRY THAYER

as an exegete are also seen in his contributions to the American edition of Meyer's *Commentary on the New Testament*, and were conspicuous in his work with the American Committee of Revisers. In the same high rank of New Testament scholarship was Joseph Henry Thayer, translator of Winer's (and also of Buttmann's) *Grammar of the Greek Testament*, and author of the most complete and satisfactory *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* in existence.

William Hayes Ward, long and widely known as editor of the New York *Independent*, deserves an honorable mention in connection with the biblical scholars of the period of which I write. As early as 1870 he had made himself acquainted with the cuneiform inscriptions of western Asia and was among the first, if not himself the very first, of American scholars to attract attention as an Assyriologist. He was for a time lecturer on Assyriology at Yale, and he directed the Wolfe expedition to Babylonia in 1884. His membership in the American Oriental Society and his various contributions to

its learned discussions and to various magazines and reviews attest his high place among biblical scholars and orientalists. Crawford H. Toy, for the last thirty-two years professor of Hebrew and oriental languages at Harvard, has distinguished himself by many publications of exceptional value. His revised Hebrew text and version of Ezekiel for the *Polychrome Bible*, and his commentary on Proverbs in the *International Critical Commentary* have received highest commendation and are an honor to American scholarship. D. G. Lyon, of

the same school, began to attract attention as a Semitic scholar about 1882, and his *Assyrian Manual* and other contributions to biblical and oriental studies have steadily increased his fame. Charles Augustus Aiken, sometime president of Union College, was elected to the chair of Old Testament literature in Princeton Theological Seminary in 1882. His translation of Zöckler's *Commentary on Proverbs*, with critical and grammatical notes, in the American edition of Lange, displayed no small amount of original research, and evinced his



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right to a place among the eminent biblical scholars of his generation. John A. Broadus, a man of multifarious gifts, pastor, classical teacher, professor of New Testament exegesis and homiletics, president of a theological seminary, and author of many volumes of genuine worth, was at the maturity of his mental strength in 1882. His various labors were in beautiful keeping with his sweetness of spirit and admirable urbanity. Along with Broadus I am wont to associate Roswell D. Hitchcock, whose

Complete Analysis of the Holy Scriptures and editorial work on the *American Theological Review* gave him an honorable place among the acknowledged biblical scholars of our land. He was a teacher of rare power, and a preacher who had few superiors in ability to illuminate and enforce the word of truth. It was my good fortune, when a pastor in New York, to find my way at times into his classroom in the Union Theological Seminary, and to observe his genius and skill in portraying the great characters and the crucial periods of the history of Christianity. Here also it is well to speak of that great theologian, Charles Hodge of Princeton, who was a member of the New Testament Company of Revisers although the infirmities of age prevented his meeting with the committee. His commentaries on Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians, were widely read, and his contributions to the *Princeton Review*, of which he was founder and editor, would fill many volumes. His long life and commanding influence at home and abroad made his name almost a household word in all the churches. His son and successor, Archibald Alexander Hodge, proved himself a workman of the highest order, but he was cut off in the maturity of his manly strength, and his important trust passed to the care of Benjamin B. Warfield, who had already distinguished himself in the work of New Testament criticism and interpretation. Professor Warfield still adorns that honored and historic chair at Princeton, and is recognized as an authority in the system of Christian doctrine for which his theological seminary stands and has reason to boast its consistent record.

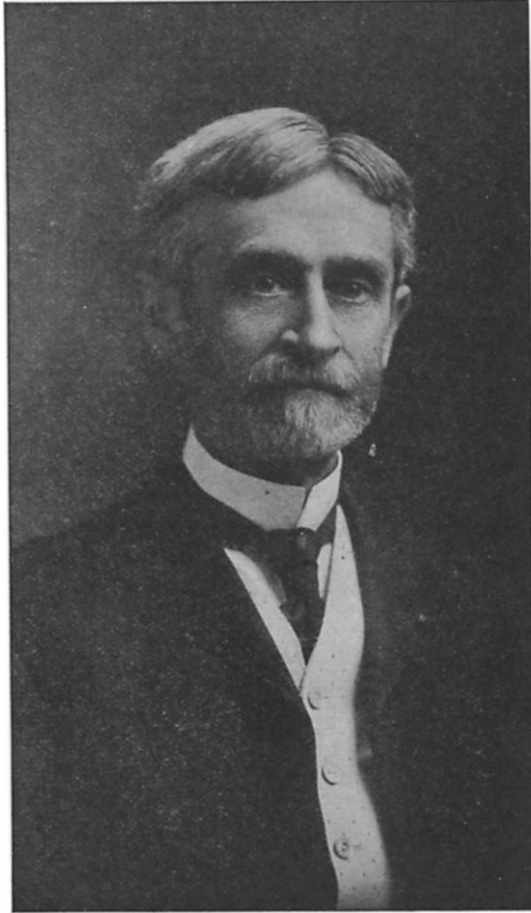
Edward Cone Bissell will be long remembered as one of the earnest and able antagonists of the modern critical methods of dissecting various Old Testament books, and of assigning the different sections to divers authors. His papers read before the Society of Biblical Exegesis and his volumes on the *Historical Origin of the Bible* and the *Origin and Structure of the Pentateuch*, are among the most strenuous essays extant in defense of the traditional opinions. His translation and commentary on the Apocrypha of the Old Testament formed a supplemental volume to the American edition of Lange's *Biblework*. In closest sympathy with Bissell in adherence to the conservative views of Old Testament

literature was that scholarly pastor and divine, Talbot W. Chambers, whose active ministry covered a period of well-nigh sixty years. He was a gifted organizer and leader of men, editor of theological reviews, translator of several books in the American edition of Lange's *Commentary* and an instructive preacher. Another prominent New York pastor was Howard Crosby, magnetic and active in many forms of Christian work yet finding time for a large amount of critical study and exposition of the Scriptures. His publications were numerous and his presence among the New Testament Revisers was always an inspiration. John DeWitt and John Lillie belonged to this same company of careful exegetes and ranked with the best representatives of American biblical scholarship. In this same memorable coterie were Howard Osgood, and Matthew B. Riddle, and Frederic Gardiner, and Charles M. Mead, and George E. Day, who were all connected either with the Revision Committee or the American edition of Lange, or with both. Marvin R. Vincent was for twenty-five years distinguished as an erudite pastor and preacher, and has been for nearly another quarter of a century a professor of New Testament exegesis in Union Seminary, and a voluminous writer. His translation of Bengel's *Gnomon of the New Testament*, in co-operation with Charlton T. Lewis, was as admirable for its excellence as it was noteworthy as the work of a young man yet in his twenties. Among his later publications his *Word Studies in the New Testament*, *Critical Commentary on Philippians and Philemon*, and *History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* deserve particular mention as worthy of highest commendation. I should also mention Bernard Pick, a pastor of Presbyterian and Lutheran churches, a Talmudic scholar, a member of several learned societies and a prolific author. Although most of his life-work was in the department of philosophy, George T. Ladd should also be mentioned among the biblical scholars of this time. His two large volumes on *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, published in 1883, are dedicated "to that great number of Christian teachers and thinkers who hold the biblical system of moral and religious truth, but who are in doubt as to what they shall conclude concerning the sacred writings in which that system is contained."

Among the names of biblical scholars who were rising into prominence in 1882 not one was more noteworthy than that of Charles Augustus Briggs. I need not mention the score or more of volumes that bear his honored name, for they are known and read by all thorough students in the department of literature to which they belong. He was one of the managing editors of the *Presbyterian Review* of 1880 to 1890, and also of the *International Critical Commentary* and the *International Theological Library*. In co-operation with Professors Brown and Driver he has assisted in producing the *New Hebrew and English Lexicon* which easily supersedes all others in its field. He has perhaps been made unduly famous for his views on the questions of modern higher criticism, in which he was no more to be assailed than the great body of the biblical scholars and teachers of his time. His thoroughgoing research early convinced him that many current opinions on the date, authorship, and compilation of not a few of the canonical books are untenable. Internal evidence spoke to him with far greater force than external tradition or ecclesiastical authority. For his zealous maintenance of his convictions he was suspended from the ministry of his church, and after a time entered the ministry of another communion. However individual opinions may differ as to his critical views and his manner of defending them, he will ever command a large place, not only in the esteem of biblical scholars, but in the cordial affection of an innumerable host of friends. It is very natural to associate with Dr. Briggs, the name of his distinguished pupil, colleague, and collaborator, Francis Brown, whose leadership in the preparation of the *New Hebrew Lexicon* already mentioned, and assignment of work both in the *International Library* and the *International Commentary*, attest a high position in the front rank of our Semitic and biblical scholars. Here too I should mention Henry P. Smith, another superior biblical scholar, who, like Briggs, and for like reasons, was suspended from the ministry of his church but found a welcome elsewhere. His fine scholarship has attained a monumental expression in his *Old Testament History* and his *Commentary on Samuel* in the International series.

There were other biblical scholars of thirty years ago, whose

names I fear I have overlooked, but who were well worthy of mention among those I have so briefly and inadequately sketched. William Arnold Stevens won early distinction as a classical Greek



WILLIAM ARNOLD STEVENS

scholar, and later, for more than thirty years, he was professor of New Testament interpretation in Rochester Theological Seminary. With the assistance of E. D. Burton he prepared an *Outline Handbook of the Life of Christ*, and an English *Harmony of the Gospels*

for *Historical Study* which have proved most helpful to students of the New Testament. His commentary on the Epistles to the Thessalonians, in the *American Commentary on the New Testament*, is a fine specimen of clear, readable, masterly exposition. Another honored name, not to be omitted from this goodly company, is Samuel Ives Curtiss, too early called away from his useful labors. Trained in the Union Theological Seminary and at the universities of Bonn and Leipzig, he was well known in Europe and America. His volume on the *Levitical Priests* and his annotated translation of Bickell's *Outlines of Hebrew Grammar* gained for him an enviable distinction at the time he finished his studies in Germany. His later work as professor of biblical literature in Chicago Theological Seminary steadily increased his reputation as a biblical scholar of fine discrimination and of sound judgment. Excessive devotion to his chosen tasks and repeated visits to the Holy Land during the summer months for the purpose of studying the "primitive religion of today," overtaxed his strength, and ended his career at the period of his greatest usefulness.

During the thirty years since the first issue of *The Hebrew Student* and the Revised Version of the New Testament, a great number of experts in biblical learning have risen into prominence; and many of them are worthy of rank with any of the previous generation. Their names appear in the leading theological journals of the present day and in numerous volumes that have commanded the attention of the learned world.